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THE DINING TABLE.

By HESTER M. POOLE.



NO portion of the dwelling is the taste of the house mistress so much *en evidence* as in the dining-room. Carelessness here is unpardonable. There must be ample space, good ventilation, plenty of light but no glare, linen spotless and crystal shining (though neither may be of a fine quality), and china without the suspicion of a nick. Then, with two or three plain dishes well arranged and served, garnished

with greenery and flowers, an American housewife can entertain a king.

After each meal the dining-room windows, even in the coldest weather, should be opened both at the top and bottom. Nothing is more unappetizing than to dine to the accompaniment of stale odors. For the same reason heavy draperies are to be avoided.

For the present, and rightfully, too, the preference is given to all white table linen. Napkins should always correspond with the cloth, and, of course, fine and heavy damask, as fine as the purse can buy, is in rule. Small patterns are never out of style. Such are stars, balls and cobweb, acorn borders with vine centers, daisies, buttercups and similar designs. The new spring patterns are real works of art.

The housekeeper, skillful with her needle, takes delight in outlining the borders in Kensington or stem-stitch, either in white or wash silks for luncheon cloths.

On uncolored table linen both china and silver are seen to their best advantage. If a bit of color is liked, it may be introduced in center pieces and serviettes for the bread plate, the olive dish and in doilies. In fact the cloth may serve as a background for as much display as convenience will allow.

Where there is a houseful of children and laundry work is at a premium, a thoughtful mother managed this. Instead of large tablecloths for breakfast and luncheon she used napkins half a yard square, laid diamond-wise under each plate. These napkins she made out of a nice quality of butcher's linen. Each child had a dozen or more hemmed, marked in one corner with his or her initial in Madonna cotton. These could be renewed at pleasure, and the landress counted a dozen pieces as no more than one large cloth.

Napkins remain the same large size, from 22 to 27 inches square. Doilies are made in diverse sizes and materials. The finest are bolting cloth, either exquisitely embroidered or painted. They are sometimes finished at home in sheer India linen or Japanese silk. A little skill will enable the housekeeper to paint them delicately in dull blues, pinks and yellows. The patterns may be either conventionalized flowers on a tiny scale, or birds and landscapes rather suggested in outlines than filled in solidly.

Fruit napkins are sometimes decorated with mottoes borrowed from Shakespeare, from Alice in Wonderland, or from original phrases. In this decoration the imagination will find ample play.

Doilies for bon-bons, salted almonds and flower vases should have special finish. The old, outworn style of resting the meat tray, where carving is done at the table, on a tray-cloth wrought with the similitude of a knife and fork, should be forever a thing of the past. It is far better taste to have a plain napkin laid diamond-wise under the platter. If oblong it should be about 22 by 27 inches.

Open-work and hemstitched linen is still popular. Under it is usually laid colored linen, and this again covers a double layer of double-faced white Canton flannel. Upon this linen not only looks better, but it is more serviceable. No starch, or at most but an infinitesimal portion, should be used in table linen. Nor is it good taste to have it ironed in centerfolds and flintings in imitation of hotel table linen.

Where a color is used under open-work linen the flowers should correspond, as gold colored under linen with yellow flowers and red with carnation.

On special occasions a square of cut work some twenty-two inches across is placed, as a center-piece, over rich satin or velvet. Sometimes a piece of rich white lace, either duchesse or something similar, extends the length of the table. These are not new, and, it need hardly be said, will be used only by a restricted class.

One of the latest fashions is that of a triangle-shaped dining table, made by placing three small tables corner to corner. Over the cavity may be placed a large circular tray which can be filled with flowers. This arrangement has the merit of novelty, and the fact that every one faces the host and hostess, who occupy seats respectively at the point of the triangle and the center of the base. The central decoration must be low, either a mass of violets or short stemmed flowers.

In embroidering serviettes it is well to secure harmony between the decoration and that for which it is used. For instance, bread cloths, some eighteen inches square, may be outlined in gold colored ears of wheat. For the meat dish the heavy unbleached linen is both appropriate and serviceable. A hem finished with hemstitching is more durable than fringe.

For luncheon nothing can be more tasteful than to remove the cloth and have each individual plate set directly upon a doilie wrought for that purpose. The latter may be veined in outline stitches and edged with buttonhole, all in white or colored silks. Nothing can be handsomer on a polished surface of mahogany, cherry or oak. The pattern may be that of an exaggerated pansy leaf, a water lily leaf or the flower of the buttercup, or the fine petaled wild rose. It may also be a water lily blossom or any one of a hundred other forms. It would take but little imagination and less practice to design such forms and mark them, with a lead pencil, on round-threaded heavy linen. With proper care they will last several years if used only at lunch.



ELEGANT WHATNOT IN MEDIEVAL CARVED OAK. EXHIBITED BY MACBETH & ROBERTS AT COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION.

Table-mats crocheted in heavy cotton or sewed in fanciful patterns out of corset-cord may be further adorned with milky white glass-heads. Those will effectually keep hot dishes from discoloring the surface of the table.

As for the tableware, the names and prices are too numerous to mention. At first-class houses a good, common earthen ware dinner set, stamped with brown, blue and green may be procured for \$22.00. It is not so cheap looking as one would suppose. For \$45 a handsome set may be chosen.

There are those who will have thought that it is not imported. For such come the Wedgware, the Doulton, the Minton, and so on up to the hundreds and thousands of dollars. For those who choose a nice porcelain, while believing in home manufacture, the Trenton ware amply satisfies the most fastidious. It may not be generally known that the famous Beleck ware is almost exactly reproduced in these New Jersey potteries. Also that make which is sold in large shops at exorbitant patterns for imported china and porcelain, knows no country more foreign than the little state which lies between two big cities.

For table decorations there are designs without number. A bright woman may easily improvise upon a hundred different schemes.

One principle should never be forgotten. If flowers are used they should not be profusely selected of the sweet scented varieties. With the odors of viands and those of blossoms mingling together, there can be but little harmony. Neither should the decorations be made so high that the view is intercepted between parties placed *vis-a-vis*. Again, while the dining-room should be comfortable, it is a mistake to have it kept too warm. The windows may be slightly opened from the top, yet not enough to create a draught.

The dining-room ought to be well lighted. A number of mirrors adds to that purpose. Nothing can be more enlivening than the effect of multiplied lights, and the reflections from the gleam of crystal and silver. Somehow these seem to gently exhilarate and promote conversation.

Banquet lamps, some two feet high, are suitable for the dining table. They may be softly shaded in harmony with the prevailing tints of the flowers or other decoration. These shades may be of home manufacture. Either self-colored china silk, crimson, gold, pink or white trimmed with lace, or of bolting cloth painted in soft colors, are good. Not so are huge paper flowers clustered on the shade, or even natural flowers. Both are too conspicuous. In the latter case the heat, causing the flowers to wither, proves the juxtaposition of fragile blooms and light to be unfortunate. With electricity the case is much better.

For the latter mode of lighting some curious decorations have been designed. In one case a tower of jelly enclosed an electric bulb whose brilliant radiance seemed magical. In another a mimic forest of ferns glowed with what appeared to be a cloud of fire-flies. In both cases the decorations were in the middle of the table.

ALL the beautiful lakes in the Empire State are reached by the New York Central.

ALL the great medicinal springs in the Empire State are reached by the New York Central.

DECORATIVE NOTE.

FOR the past eight or ten years plates large and small, thin and heavy, severely simple, and wonderfully extravagant in decoration, have held first place in the hearts of housekeepers who delight in the giving of dinners whereat many changes of china are necessary. The smart and friendly rivalry between women who can indulge their fancy for plate collecting has been carried to its utmost, and Dresden and Sevres platters ranked in solid rows in china-closet shelves till good sense, and perhaps a love of change, called loudly for a halt in the extravagant habit. And now Venetian glass has suddenly become wonderfully popular with the women whose purses are never more than half empty. In the shops where all delicate and breakable wares are generously exposed under broad stretches of plate-glass windows, whole shelves are filled with crystal vases, goblets, bowls, and cups tenderly tinted as the rainbow,

full of color as a field of wild flowers, and fragile as the robin's egg. One quite sympathizes with the frugal housewife, who at this sight, weakly breaks her noble resolve not to spend one cent more of her allowance, intending to put all into the bank, by prying and purchasing just that one dear little rose-colored vase that is as fragile as a wind flower.

Fourteen dollars for a vase shaped like a tall champagne glass, faintest rose or *vert* in tint and glowing with flecks of gold, while white crystal tendrils climb up the stem that is not thicker than that of a rose. Seventy-five dollars for six small finger-glasses crimped about the edges and veined with gold, and one hundred dollars for a bowl of glass as yellow as daffodils, with handles formed of clear crystal dragons. Touch any one of them lightly with the finger-nail, and a pure, clear ring comes out, and a sharp touch with one's latch-key will shiver the thin glass in fragments, so brittle is it. One rarely finds a bargain in Venetian glass, nor are odd bits often sold off for a trifle, for the crystal that comes from the famous little islands in the Adriatic is costly by reason of the materials of which it is composed and the skill required in its manufacturing. Then, too, great risk is incurred in bringing anything so frail on the long, rough voyage from Italy. Doubly precious, therefore, are the bits of gorgeous sets of Venetian glass that it is now every self-respecting woman's duty to display on her brilliant dinner-table or on tables and cabinets in her drawing-room.



THREE-FOLD SCREEN IN MEDIEVAL CARVED OAK. EXHIBITED BY MACBETH & ROBERTS AT THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION.

BARON LOUIS BEAUPRÉ.

WE reproduce on the following page an original design by Baron Louis Beupré. This amateur artist belongs to an aristocratic French family, and has inherited his taste for art. His only artistic preparation was drawing lessons taken during his literary studies at the celebrated College des Jesuites near Paris. The advice of a talented painter, A. Vierling, led him to cultivate art in a practical way. His independent fortune permitted him to consider this career only as an interesting pastime, fit to occupy the few hours he could dis-